

Chitrakoot Dhama Yatra

In the Holy Footsteps of Lord Ramacandra's Forest Home



PS: This article is also published on website [Chitrakoot Yatra](#)

One of India's great pilgrimage sites, the Holy Dhama of Chitrakoot is remotely located amidst the dense forests of Bundelkhand, on the border of Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, far-away from any major city. In the deep forests of Chitrakoot (Chitrakuta), Lord Sri Ramacandra, Sita and Lakshmana spent 11-and-a-half years of Their 14 years of exile. Lord Rama exhibited many wonderful pastimes here. He especially bestowed mercy upon great sages through His personal association who had been praying and eagerly waiting for His arrival for a very long time, as described in the Valmiki Ramayana! The dense Dandakaranya forest adjoins Chitrakoot.

Chitrakoot means "delightful *asrama*". Though exiled from His kingdom, Ayodhya, Lord Rama lived happily in this beautiful holy place. The entire area, which is widespread, is very pleasant and picturesque even today! When Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana sojourned on Their journey to exile, after crossing the *Triveni sangam* at Prayagraj, They arrived at Bharadvaja Muni's ashram. The great sage Bharadvaja insisted Lord Rama spend His exile period in his *asrama*. However, Lord Rama expressed that since residents of Ayodhya are close by to this place, they can appear there in search of Him. Lord Rama inquired about another place where They should stay. Bharadvaja Muni suggested the Lord go to the forest of Chitrakoot.

Chitrakoot has long been a place of devotion and austerity. The hills and forests have many caves, providing shelter for the sages. Great sage Atri, Sati Anasuya, Sarbhanga, Sutikshna and various other devotees meditated here. Lord Rama Himself sang the praises of Chitrakoot. In particular, Janaki-kunda, Sphatik Shila, Rama-Shaiyya, Sarbhanga Ashram, Sati Anasuya *asrama* and Kalanjara are among important places to visit and are exquisitely beautiful! The atmosphere in Chitrakoot is serene and soaks with devotion to Lord Rama. The people in general are simple and modern day urban advancement has largely untouched Chitrakoot. Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana went on, wandering from *asrama* to *asrama* in the Dandakaranya forest, meeting the great sages. They would stay at each hermitage for a week, a month or longer, sometimes even a year.

Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 7 chapter 14 verses 30-33, Canto 5 chapter 19 verse 16 and chapter 20 verse 15 describe the glories of Chitrakoot. Valmiki *Ramayana* describes in detail the pastimes of Lord Rama in Chitrakoot.

Kamadagiri Hill is in Chitrakoot town and is of prime significance. It is venerated as the holy embodiment of Lord Ramacandra. Lord Rama spent a lot of time in this area. Parikrama Marg around Kamadagiri stretches 5 km long and the entire tract is easy to circumambulate. Shape of this lush green Kamadagiri hill resembles a great bow when viewed from any direction in Chitrakoot. Base of Kamadagiri is encircled by a chain of temples and *asramas*. Another of Lord Rama's names is Kamtanath. Lord Kamtanath is the principal Deity not only of Kamadgiri, but of the whole of Chitrakoot region. There are four Lord Kamtanath (Rama) temples on the four corners of this hill. Besides, there are many important ancient temples of Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Lord Nrsimhadeva and a temple of Lord Jagannatha along the Parikrama route that are important to visit.

Sri Bharata Milap Temple is on the Kamadagiri Parikrama marg. At this spot, Lord Rama and His brother Bharata met when Bharata had come along with His entourage to persuade the Lord to quit His exile and return to Ayodhya. Bharata piteously repented for the decision made by His mother, Kaikeyi, to banish the Lord to 14 years of exile. So much devotion and loving affection flowed between the parties when they met here, that even the stones melted. In the big courtyard of this temple, there are two mandaps where one can have the darshans of lotus footprints of Lord Rama, Bharata and mother Kausalya.

Janaki-kunda is 3 km from Chitrakoot and is picturesque. Here Sita would bathe. Mandakini River flows here between a series of white-coloured rocks that are marked with the worshipable footprints of Lord Rama and Sita. Along both the sides of the river stream the entire area is exquisitely beautiful and serene. On a steep escarpment that rises above the river, is a cave shrine known as Sita Kunda. The waters of Sita Kunda come from the Godavari River. Near the kunda is a havan bedi, where Sita used to perform havan, the fire sacrifice, after taking a bath. The havan bedi was built by Sita herself and local priests come here every day to recite Ramayana.

Sphatik Shila is a few kilometres from Janaki Kunda in a densely forested area along the bank of river Mandakini. Lord Rama and Sita came here often and feasted Their eyes on the beauty of Chitrakoot. Natural beauty of this place is mesmerizing. There are two unique reddish-white boulders called Sphatik Shila. They resemble a crystal and have Lord Rama and Sita's footprints. Once, Jayant, the son of King Indra, took the form of a crow and pecked at the feet of Sita Devi, wishing to test the might of Lord Rama. Sri Rama shot an arrow in his direction. With no one else to take shelter from, Jayant sought the protection of Rama Himself. Although Rama took out one of Jayant's eyes, He then pardoned him for his sinful act.

Bharata Koop is where Bharata emptied the entire water which He carried for Lord Rama's abhishek in Chitrakoot. With His great desire that Lord Rama return to Ayodhya, Bharata wanted to do the Rajya-abhisheka, the coronation of Lord Rama at Chitrakoot. He collected water from all the holy places and brought it in huge containers to Chitrakoot. When Lord Rama refused to be crowned and continued to honour the promise to His father, Dasaratha, Bharata, upon the advice of sages present, poured the holy waters in a deep well at this place, Bharata Koop. It is 11 km from Chitrakoot. There is a large well with sweet water that one can honour as a Prasadam. Also, there is a unique temple of Sri Bharata gracing on the altar with His wife, Mandavai.

Rama-ghata is at the centre of the Chitrakoot town on the banks of Mandakini River. Lord Rama, Lakshmana and Sita bathed here. A series of Lord Rama temples are there on both the banks of river. Every evening a wonderful Arati ceremony takes place that is attended by many pilgrims.

Sati Anusuya Asrama is 16 km upstream from Chitrakoot. Deep in the thick forest, the great sage Atri Muni and his wife Anusuya lived here, along with their three sons, Duttatreya, Durvasa, and Chandra. Sati Anusuya was the daughter of Kardama Muni and Devahuti. She had nine sisters and one brother, Lord Kapila. Lord Brahma performed the marriage of Sati Anusuya with Atri Muni. At one point, this place was suffering greatly because of drought and people experienced terrible famine. Neither the people, animals nor birds had adequate food or water. Sati Anusuya performed severe austerities that brought the River Mandakini to manifest and this area was thus replenished. Lord Rama and Sita also visited this place to meet Atri Muni and Sati Anusuya. Dense forests of Dandakaranya begin from here, near the asrama, and grow outwards. At one time, this area was ruled by Ravana, who put in charge his rakshasa representatives, Khara and Viradha. They ruled with a hard hand, inflicting a lot of anxiety upon the people of Chitrakoot.

Viradha Kunda is situated deep inside the thick Dandakaranya forest. After spending some time at Sati Anusuya Asrama, Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana proceeded to Dandakaranya forest. As they walked along, a gigantic raksasa, Viradha, clad with bloodstained tiger skin, sunken eyes, long sharp teeth, jagged jaw, a large round belly with his spear dangled with the heads of three lions, four tigers, two wolves, ten spotted deer and an elephant, all dripping with blood appeared. He roared ferociously and tried catching hold of Sita. He said that Brahma benedicted him to become immune from all weapons. He advised Lord Rama and Lakshmana to run away and leave Sita for him. Otherwise he would be forced to kill Them. Rama and Lakshmana took up Their swords. However, even though They severely hacked his body, Viradha picked Them in his arms and began carrying Them away deep into the forest. Upon seeing this, Sita cried out piteously. Exhibiting divine prowess, Rama and Lakshmana decide to kill him and cut off his two arms. As Viradha fell on the ground, bereft of his senses, Rama and Lakshmana continued to beat him. In spite of this, Viradha did not die. Seeing this, Rama said, "Since this demon cannot be slain in battle, let Us bury him alive." As Lakshmana dug, Viradha regained consciousness and said, "I now recognize you. In truth, I am Gandharva, Tumburu. Because of lusting after the apsara, Rambha, I was cursed by Kuvera to become *raksasa* until the time that I would be delivered by You. Please bury me in this hole to release me from my curse. Thereafter, please go to meet the great rsi Sarbhanga who resides 12 miles from here and is waiting to receive You. Lord Rama kept His foot on Viradha while Lakshmana continued digging the hole. When Lakshmana had finished, Rama threw him into the hole and quickly covered him up with large stones. Thus, Viradha was delivered.

Viradha Kunda is 6 km from the Shabari Fall near Jamunihai village and at the meeting point of Bambiha and Tikariya villages on the Amrawati Ashram road. Here there is a vast reservoir of water. This kunda was Viradha's place of shelter where he would disappear from using his mystic powers.

Sarbhanga Asrama is 20 km from Sati Anusuya Asrama amid Dandakaranya forest. Lord Rama gave *darshan* here to the great sage Sarbhanga. Nearby the Sarbhanga Asrama there is a Ganga-kund. Sarbhanga Asrama sits on a hill, at the foot of which are *108 Yajna-vedikas* or sacred seats alongside the place of *yajya*.

Sutikshna Rsi Asrama is one of the most beautiful and charming sites situated 4 km from Sarbhanga Asrama. Lord Rama personally appeared before the great sage Sutikshna here to fulfil his intense desire to have the Lord's *darshan* and serve Him. Simple-hearted Sutikshna was the disciple of the great sage Agastya Muni. He had an unwavering devotion to Lord Sri Ramacandra. Sutikshna was so intelligent that within a short time he completed his education from sage Agastya. Agastya was astonished by this. Sutikshna asked Agastya what Guru *daksina* he wanted. Sage Agastya told Sutikshna that he did not want anything from him as teaching such a student in itself was an honour. But Sutikshna was adamant and he requested sage Agastya to accept some kind of Guru *daksina*. Agastya, through his divine vision, foresaw that one day, Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana would come to meet Sutikshna at his hermitage. Agastya asked Sutikshna to arrange a meeting between him and Lord Rama, and that would be his Guru *daksina*. Sutikshna was very pleased. However, thinking himself to be

unqualified to have the *darshans* and receive Lord Rama, Sutikshna mediated for a very long time and incessantly chanting the names of Lord Rama. This incident happened before Lord Rama had descended to the earthly realm. He continued his meditation through the seasons. Years passed by and now he was lean and thin and people could count his bones.

Single-minded focus of Sutikshna baffled people. Some thought he was a fool to wait for someone this long. Many people attempted to talk him out of his meditation. They pointed out that it was worthless to waste life in pursuit of meeting a person. But nothing deviated Sutikshna. He continued with his unwavering devotion. Finally, one day, when Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana reached Sutikshna's hermitage, They saw him chanting with intense devotion, being oblivious of anything. Lord Rama and Lakshmana stood under a tree and waited for Sutikshna. They called out Sutikshna's name, but Sutikshna was unmoved. Understanding this, Lord Rama disappeared from the core of the heart of Sutikshna. Extremely perturbed, Sutikshna immediately opened his eyes and was transcendently elated to have the personal *darshans* of Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana.

Meeting of Sutikshna and Lord Rama is unexplainable. Both cried and embraced each other. Lord Rama told Sutikshna that He knew that his mind was completely fixed on Him. Sutikshna had nothing else in his mind other than Rama. This is the reason why Lord Rama came to meet him. Thereafter, Lord Rama took a tour of Sutikshna's *asrama*. There He also saw the piles of skeletons of the sages who had been killed by man-eating, nocturnal *raksasa* demons. Rama, seeing this awful sight, took an oath that He would rid the earth of all wicked rakshasa's. The sages were delighted and relieved at this and welcomed His proclamation with joy.

Ram-Shaiyya is 3 km from Kamadagiri Mountain near Bihara village. At this place there is a large flat-bedrock that has the body markings of both Rama and Sita and Lord Rama's bow between the two. About 100 meters away from here, across the road, and overlooking it there is another rock which is known as Lakshmana-Chowki. Lakshmana used to be on guard here to protect Sri Rama and Sita. This beautiful rock bears a mark resembling the head side of a bed. It also has imprints of Lakshmana sitting down with his bow by the side.

Lakshmana Pahadi, where Lakshmana guarded Sri Rama and Sita, is on a hill at the offset of Kamadagiri on the Parikrama marg. A ropeway connects to this place and one can see spectacular views of the entire Chitrakoot. On this hill there is the exact spot where Lakshmana guarded. The deities of Lakshmana and Lord Rama grace the main temple altar.

Kalanjara is 78 km from Chitrakoot. *Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 5, chapter 8, verse 30* describes Kalanjara Mountain in relation to Bharata Maharaja's pastimes when he became a deer in his next life.

"Although Bharata Maharaja received the body of a deer, by constant repentance he became completely detached from all material things. He did not disclose these things to anyone, but he left his mother deer in a place known as Kalanjara Mountain, where he was born. He again went to the forest of Salagrama and to the asrama of Pulastya and Pulaha."

The stunning panorama of Kalanjara is marked by the famous temple of Neelkantha, Sita Sej, Mragadhara, Patal-ganga, Ram Katora lake and ancient medieval structures.

Sri Matyagajendra Nath Temple is a famous temple situated on the Rama-ghat. Lord Brahma performed penance here in the *Satya-yuga* and installed the Siva-linga here as Kshetrapal as the protector of the dhama.

International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) has a preaching centre at Chitrakoot.

Deity of Kshirachora Gopinath at Remuna has a connection with Chitrakoot as this deity was carved by Lord Rama at Chitrakoot when He reminisced His future pastimes in *Dvapara-yuga* as Lord Krishna. Sita worshipped this deity until she was in Chitrakoot. Thereafter, Lord Brahma undertook the worship. In the 13th century, King Langula Narasimhadeva of Orissa brought this deity to Remuna. (Ref: A Glimpse of Lord Khirachora Gopinatha, published in 2004 by the Khirachora Gopinatha Temple in Remuna.)

Chitrakoot Dhama is situated 131 km, a two-and-a-half hour drive from Prayagraj. Prayagraj is connected by direct flights from Delhi. Chitrakoot has a railway station by name Chitrakoot Dham (station code CKTD) and is connected by train from many parts of India. Chitrakoot airport is under-construction with the aim of promoting pilgrimage. Also, Khajuraho airport is 159 km from Chitrakoot.

Places to visit in and around Chitrakoot:

1. Sri Kamadgiri Hill
2. Janaki Kunda
3. Sphatik Shila
4. Sati Anusuya Asrama
5. Sarbhanga Asrama
6. Sutikshna Rsi Asrama
7. Sri Bharata Milap Temple
8. Bharata Koop
9. Rama-ghata
10. Ram-Shaiyya
11. Gupt Godavari
12. Kalanjara
13. Temples around Kamadgiri Parikrama Marg
14. Hanuman Dhara Temple
14. Viradha Kunda
16. Sri Matta Gajendranath Temple
17. ISKCON Chitrakoot Temple

1. Sri Kamadgiri Hill

Sri Kamadgiri Hill is venerated as the holy embodiment of Lord Ramacandra and the shape is like a bow. Lord Rama spent a lot of time in this area. Another of Lord Rama's names is Kamtanath. Lord Kamtanath is the principal Deity not only of Kamadgiri, but of the whole of Chitrakoot region. Lord Kamtanath's consort, Sita, resides here in the form of Kamadgiri Devi. There are four Lord Kamtanath (Rama) temples on the four corners of this hill.

Parikrama marg around Kamadagiri stretches 5 km long and comprises all the holy tirthas, which co-exist here. It was built by Pratap Kunwari, the Queen of the Bundela King, Maharaja Chatrasal, in 1725. Besides, there are many important ancient temples of Lord Rama, Lord Krishna, Lord Nrsimhadeva and a temple of Lord Jagannatha along the Parikrama route that are important to visit.



Welcome to Chitrakoot Dhama



Sri Kamadgiri Hill



Parikrama Marg of Kamadgiri Hill stretches for 5 km with numerous ancient temples and asramas along the way.



Sri Kamtanath Temple



Sri Kamtanath Temple



Lord Kamtanath



Lord Kamtanath, the second deity at second Sri Kamtanath Temple on the Parikrama Marg



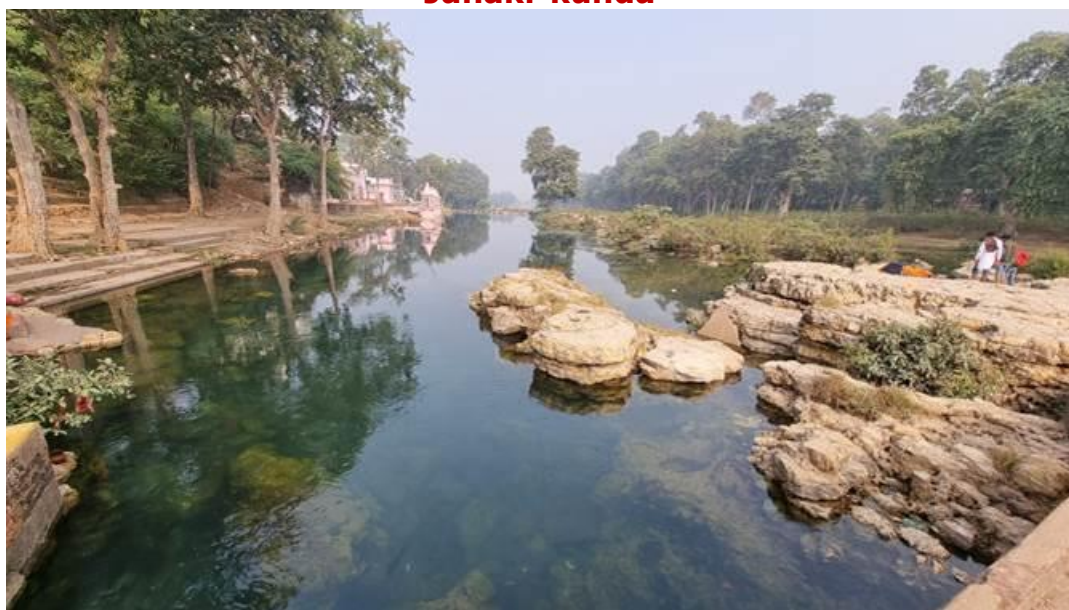
Lord Kamtanath, the third deity at third Sri Kamtanath Temple on the Parikrama Marg

2. Janaki Kunda

Janaki-kunda is 3 km from Chitrakoot and is picturesque. Here Sita would bathe. Janaki refers to the daughter of Maharaja Janaka, and is another name of Sita. Mandakini River flows here between a series of white coloured rocks that are marked with the worshipable footprints of Lord Rama and Sita. Along both the sides of the river stream the entire area is exquisitely beautiful and serene.



Janaki-kunda



Janaki-kunda



Worshipable footprints of Sita at Janaki-kunda



Sri Sri Sita Rama Lakshmana at the ancient temple in Janaki-kunda

3. Sphatik Shila

Sphatik Shila is a few kilometres from Janaki Kunda in a densely forested area along the bank of river Mandakini. Lord Rama and Sita came here often and feasted Their eyes on the beauty of Chitrakoot. Here there is a unique reddish-white boulder called Sphatik Shila that resembles a crystal. This has Lord Rama and Sita's footprints. Devotees climb up onto Sphatik Shila to have the *darshans* of Lord Rama and Sita's footprints. The local pujari is present at this spot, who can explain in detail the footprints on the boulder. Kanda moola, the forest fruit that Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana used to have while They were in exile, is also available here.



Picturesque views at Sphatik Shila



Lotus footprints of Sita and Rama at Sphatik Shila



Kanda mool – forest fruits that Sri Sri Sita Rama Lakshmana used to partake during Their exile period

4. Sati Anusuya Asrama

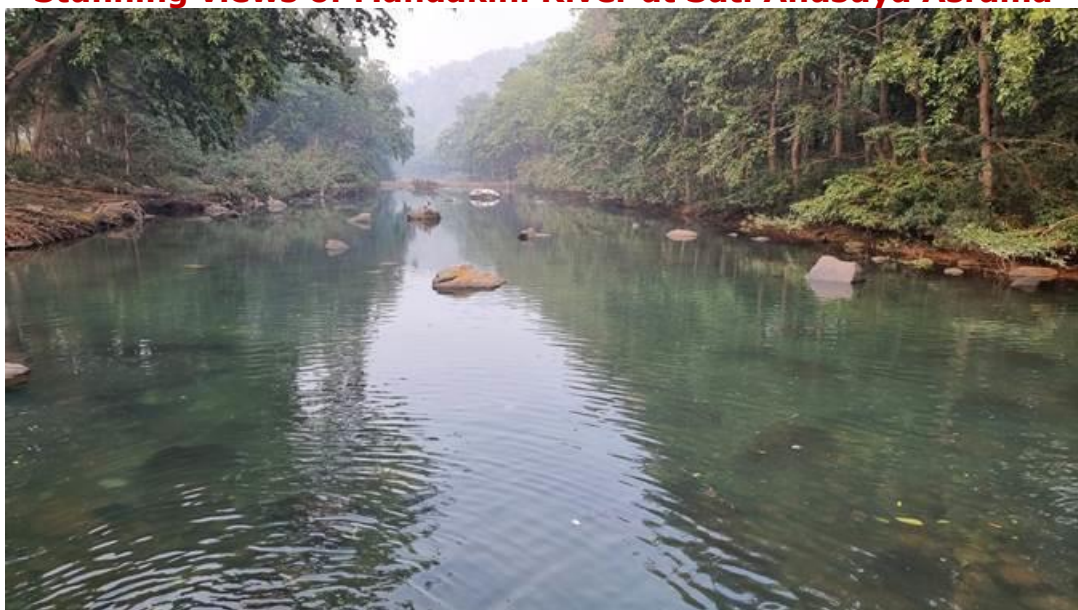
Pastimes of Sati Anusuya are memorialized at the Sati Anusuya *asrama*, which is situated in a beautiful and peaceful spot near the confluence of the Mandakini and several other streams. The temple is cut into a cliff face that rises straight up from a road along the riverbanks. In the *asrama* there are murtis of Anasuya, her husband Atri, their sons Duttatreya, Durvasa and Chandra, and various dioramas of pastimes of Lord Rama, Atri Muni and Sati Anusuya.



Stunning views of Mandakini River at Sati Anusuya Asrama



Stunning views of Mandakini River at Sati Anusuya Asrama



Beautiful views of Mandakini River at Sati Anusuya Asrama



Sati Anusuya Asrama



One of the many dioramas of pastimes of Lord Rama, Atri Muni and Sati Anusuya

5. Sarbhanga Asrama

Sarbhanga Asrama is located amidst dense Dandakaranya forest about 20 km from Sati Anusuya Asrama. Ramayana describes that after delivering the demon Viradha, Rama, Lakshmana and Sita set out to see the great sage Sarbhanga. As they approached the *rsi's* asrama, they were amazed to see King Indra, seated upon a celestial chariot whose wheels did not touch the ground. Indra was accompanied by other demigods, and was conversing with Sarbhanga. However, when Indra saw Rama approaching, he told the other demigods, "I do not want the Lord to see me yet, but only after He kills Ravana." Indra ascended to the sky on his chariot drawn by 1000 horses. Having witnessed this wonder, Lord Rama quickly went and touched Sarbhanga's feet. After being welcomed by *rsi*, Rama said, "O foremost of sages, if you are able to discuss the matter, please tell us the purpose of Indra's visit." Sarbhanga replied, "Indra came here to take me to Brahmaloka, the destination I have earned by my performance of severe penances. However, I told Indra that before departing from this world, I wanted to see You, knowing that You were nearby."

Rama requested Sarbhanga to designate a place for Him to dwell during the period of His exile. The *rsi* replied, "O Lord, You should approach the great sage Sutikshna. He will provide You with a suitable residence in the most pleasant portion of the forest. O Rama, as for myself, I have one request I beg You to make. The time has come for me to quit my body, therefore, I humbly request that I may do so in Your presence." Saying this, Sarbhanga built a fire, burning his body to ashes. Immediately afterward, Sarbhanga rose from the fire in a

youthful, dazzlingly effulgent body. He then ascended to Brahmaloaka. Since the ashram is situated in the middle of a forest area, the outer gate of the temple is closed in the evening because of wild animals.



Sarbhanga Ashrama

The ashrama is neat and clean, and immaculately maintained, which is exemplary for everyone for us to follow.



Sarbhanga Ashrama



Sarbhangha Asrama



Sri Sri Sita Rama Lakshmana. Behind is the murti of great sage Sarbhanga.



Unique 108 Yajna-vedikas at Sarbhanga Asrama



Cave near Sarbhanga Asrama



Dandakaranya forest terrain

6. Sutikshna Rsi Asrama

Sutikshna Rsi Asrama is one of the most beautiful and charming sites situated 4 km from Sarbhanga Asrama. Lord Rama personally appeared before the great sage Sutikshna here to fulfil his intense desire to have the Lord's darshan and serve Him. Pastimes of Sutikshna and Lord Rama are described above in detail.



Sutikshna Rsi Asrama



Sutikshna Rsi Asrama



Great sage Sutikshna (below) and Sri Sri Sita Rama Lakshmana



Pastime of Sutikshna Rsi chanting the names of Lord Rama and Sri Sri Sita Rama Lakshmana standing under a tree



Tree where Sri Sri Sita Rama Lakshmana stood

7. Sri Bharata Milap Temple

Bharata was Lord Rama's brother, the second of four sons of Dasaratha and Kaikeyi. Ramayana describes Kaikeyi's betrayal of the king Dasaratha, who she manipulated into promising to put Bharata on the throne, banishing Rama to a 14 year exile in the forest. Returning from His travels to learn of Rama's banishment, Bharata became furious, swearing to reverse his brother's exile. Sri Bharat Milap Temple marks the exact spot where Bharata met Rama, piteously trying to persuade Him to return to the throne of Ayodhya. Bharata, along with His mothers, also met Rama, Sita and Lakshmana here at Chitrakoot during the time of their exile. There are two mandaps where one can take the *darshans* of lotus footprints of Lord Rama, Bharata and mother Kausalya.



Sri Bharata Milap Temple



Lotus foot imprints of Lord Rama and Bharata



Bharata piteously trying to persuade Lord Rama to return to the throne of Ayodhya

8. Bharata Koop

Bharata emptied the entire water which He carried for Lord Rama's *rajya-abhishek* in Chitrakoot here at Bharata Koop. It is 11 km from Chitrakoot at a village called Bharatpur.



Bharata Koop



Rare deities of Bharata with His wife Mandavi



Ancient gigantic tree at Bharata Koop



Bharata Koop

9. Rama-ghata

Rama-ghata is at the centre of the Chitrakoot town on the banks of Mandakini River. Lord Rama, Lakshmana and Sita bathed here. A series of Lord Rama temples are there on both the banks of the river. Every evening a wonderful Arati ceremony takes place that is attended by many pilgrims.



Rama-ghata



Evening Arati ceremony on the banks of Mandakini River at Rama-ghata



Sri Sri Sita Rama Lakshmana at one of the temple on Rama-ghata

10. Ram Shaiyya

Ram-Shaiyya is 3 km from Kamadagiri Mountain near Bihara village. At this place there is a large flat-bedrock that has the body markings of both Rama and Sita and Lord Rama's bow between the two. About 100 meters away from here, across the road, and overlooking it there is another rock which is known as Lakshmana-Chowki. Lakshmana used to be on guard here to protect Sri Rama and Sita. This beautiful rock bears a mark resembling the head side of a bed. It also has imprints of Lakshmana sitting down with his bow by the side.



Ram-Shaiyya



Ram-Shaiyya – marks of Lord Rama's bow

11. Gupt Godavari

Gupt Godavari is a tiny rivulet which flows into tanks at the end of an underground cave. The source of this rivulet remains unfathomable. Lord Rama and His brother Lakshmana held court here. Two beautiful caves on the mountain were made by the demigods knowing of Lord Rama's coming here. To serve Lord Rama, Godavari was invoked from the cave. Hence, it is named as Gupt (hidden) Godavari. Devotees visiting this place can enter this cave and experience the divine atmosphere of walking in knee-deep Godavari waters. It is 19 km from Chitrakoot.



Gupt Godavari

12. Kalanjara

Kalanjara is 78 km from Chitrakoot. *Srimad-Bhagavatam Canto 5, chapter 8, verse 30* describes Kalanjara Mountain in relation to Bharata Maharaja's pastimes when he became a deer in his next life. The stunning panorama of Kalanjara is marked by the famous temple of Neelkantha, Sita Sej, Mragadhara, Patal-ganga, Ram Katora lake and ancient medieval structures.



Kalanjara



Patala Ganga at Kalanjara



Spectacular Ram Katora Lake



Neelkantha Temple

13. Temples around Kamadgiri Parikrama Marg

There are many important ancient temples and *asramas* around the 5 km stretch of the Kamadgiri Parikrama Marg.

Lakshmana Pahadi, where Lakshmana guarded Sri Rama and Sita, is on a hill at the offset of Kamadagiri on the Parikrama marg. A ropeway connects to this place and one can see spectacular views of the entire Chitrakoot. On this hill there is the exact spot where Lakshmana guarded. The deities of Lakshmana and Lord Rama grace the main temple altar.



Ancient Lakshmana Chowki



Lotus footprints of Lakshmana at Lakshmana Chowki



Lakshmana



Ancient temple of Lord Rama



Ancient temple of Lord Nrsimhadeva



Ancient temple of Lord Rama



Beautiful deities of Sri Sri Radha Krishna at a temple on Parikrama Marg

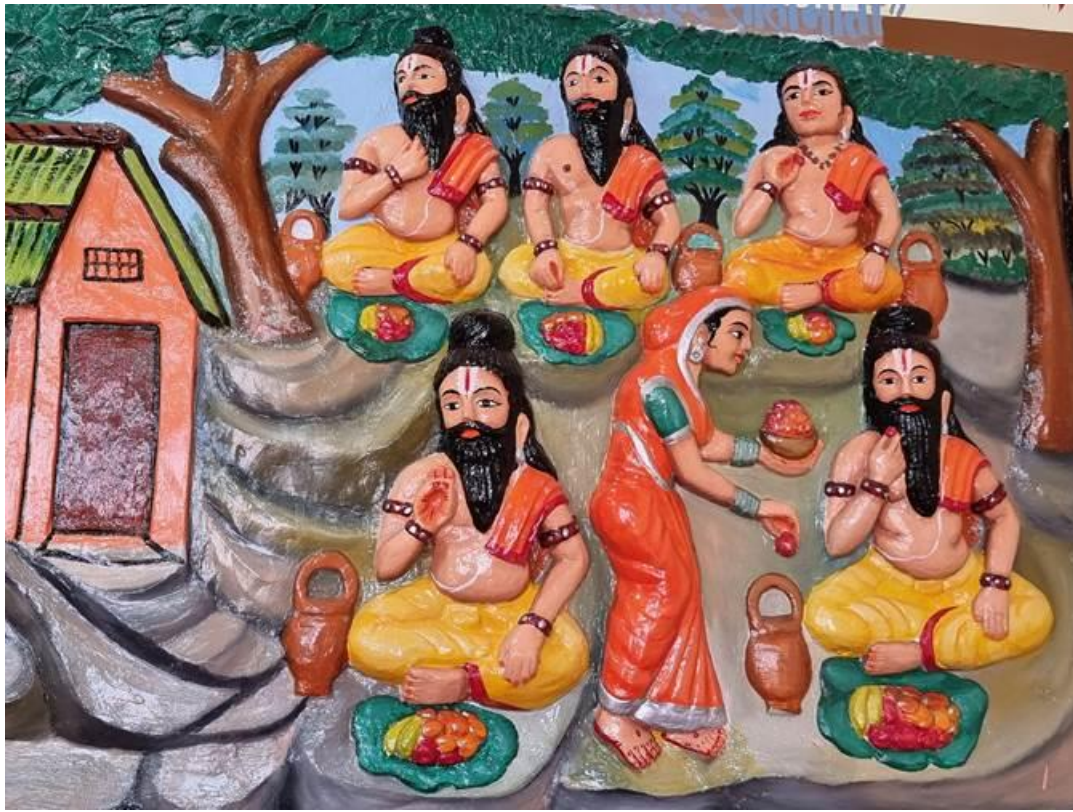
14. Sri Hanuman Dhara Temple

Sri Hanuman Dhara Temple is 5 km from Chitrakoot. This temple is about halfway up a 360 step steep hill climb. A ropeway also operates that takes one directly to the temple. At Hanuman Dhara there is a natural cave. Inside this, the deity of Hanuman Ji is worshipped with great awe and reverence. Right in front of the cave there is a waterfall. Climbing further up the hill is the Sita Rasoi (kitchen). Along the way on the hill, there are many sites commemorating scenes from the Ramayana, including several sets of Lord Rama's footprints embedded in the stones.

At the top of the hill, commanding an incredible view of the Mandakini River and the land below, is the Sita Rasoi complex. This small structure, marks Sita's cooking for Rama, Lakshmana and respectable great sages who visited at Chitrakoot during Their exile.



Hanuman Ji at Sri Hanuman Dhara Temple



Sita serving great sages at Sita Rasoi (kitchen)

Vanadevi Temple: On the way to Hanuman Dhara, 3 km from Chitrakoot, is the temple of Vanadevi. The Kula devi of Ayodhya known as Vanadevi came to reside here when Lord Rama, Sita and Lakshmana left Ayodhya and came here. One can also have the darshans of Sita's footprints that are still seen here.

15. Viradha Kunda

Viradha Kunda is situated deep inside the thick Dandakaranya forest 6 km from the Shabari Fall near Jamunihai village and at the meeting point of Bambiha and Tikariya villages on the Amrawati Ashram road. The pastime of how the gigantic ferocious demon Viradha appeared before Lord Rama and was later delivered by Him is described above.

Formerly, even great demons like Viradha were intelligent enough to understand that they were not the body but eternal spirit souls transmigrating from one body to another. Today, due to the influence of the age of Kali, even great scholars and religionists cannot understand this truth. In this age, people are short-lived, unintelligent, unfortunate and not philosophically inclined. Therefore, Lord Caitanya has shown His special mercy by delivering the easiest and most sublime method of self-realization: the chanting of the Hare Krishna *maha-mantra* by which one immediately contacts the Lord and qualifies himself to ascend to the spiritual world and live in eternal bliss with him. [reference: *Ramayana - The Story of Lord Rama* by HH Bhakti Vikas Swami Maharaj]



Beautiful views of Mandakini River on the way to Viradha Kund in the Dandakaranya forest



Lord Rama and Lakshmana's encounter with Viradha

16. Sri Matyagajendra Nath Temple

It is a famous temple situated on the Rama-ghat. Lord Brahma performed penance here in the *Satya-yuga* and installed the Siva-linga here as Kshetrapal as the protector of the dhama.



Sri Matyagajendra Nath

17. ISKCON Chitrakoot Temple

International Society for Krishna Consciousness (ISKCON) has a preaching centre at Chitrakoot.

Current Address: ISKCON Chitrakoot, Chitra Road, Near water tank, Sitapur, Chitrakoot.

Contact: HG Anant Baladev Aravind Das
Phone: +919452490680

ISKCON CHITRAKOOT



संस्थापकाचार्य
कृष्णकृपाश्रीमूर्ति श्री श्रीमद
अभयचरणारविन्द भक्तिवेदांत
स्वामी प्रभुपाद

हरे कृष्ण हरे कृष्ण
कृष्ण कृष्ण हरे हरे
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अंतराष्ट्रीय
कृष्णभावनामृत संघ
शाखा-चित्रकूट

+91 7012 363 367 +91 9170 166 200 +91 6238 678 173

ISKCON Chitrakoot



Sri Sri Radha Madhava and Sri Sri Jagannatha Baladeva Subhadra at ISKCON Chitrakoot

Directions to reach Chitrakoot Dhama:

Chitrakoot Dhama is situated 131 km, a two-and-a-half hour drive from Prayagraj. Prayagraj is connected by direct flights from Delhi. Chitrakoot has a railway station by name Chitrakoot Dham (station code CKTD) and is connected by train from many parts of India. Chitrakoot airport is under-construction with the aim of promoting pilgrimage. Also, Khajuraho airport is 159 km from Chitrakoot.

Useful Resources:

Chitrakoot and Remuna Connection - Appearance of Sri Ksira Chora Gopinatha:

<http://www.dandavats.com/?p=16963>

ISKCON Chitrakoot: <https://www.iskconchitrakoot.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/iskconchkt/>

Chitrakoot Yatra lectures:

[https://audio.iskcondesiretree.com/index.php?q=f&f=%2F02 - ISKCON Swamis%2FISKCON Swamis - A to C%2FHis Holiness Bhakti Ashraya Vaishnava Swami%2FHindi Lectures%2FYatra%2FChitrakoot Yatra](https://audio.iskcondesiretree.com/index.php?q=f&f=%2F02%20-%20ISKCON%20Swamis%20-%20A%20to%20C%20His%20Holiness%20Bhakti%20Ashraya%20Vaishnava%20Swami%20-%20Hindi%20Lectures%20-%20Yatra%20-%20Chitrakoot%20Yatra) (by HH Bhakti Ashraya Vaishnava Swami)

Ayodhya Yatra: <https://sri-ayodhya-dharma-yatra.blogspot.com/2023/03/sri-ayodhya-dharma-yatra.html>

Ramayana - The Story of Lord Rama by HH Bhakti Vikas Swami:

<https://www.amazon.com/Ramayana-Story-Bhakti-Vikasa-Swami/dp/8190829262>
<https://books.bvks.com/book/view/Ramayana-the-story-of-Lord-Rama.html>

[https://ebooks.iskcondesiretree.com/pdf/Picture Stories/Ramayana Story - Picture Form.pdf](https://ebooks.iskcondesiretree.com/pdf/Picture_Stories/Ramayana_Story_-_Picture_Form.pdf)
(Children book)

Mayapur TV: <http://Mayapur.tv> / **Vrindavana TV:** <http://Vrindavan.tv>

Holy Pilgrimages – Journey to Holy Dhams: www.Holy-Pilgrimages.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/HolyPilgrimages

Holy Dham: www.HolyDham.com

**Hare Krishna Hare Krishna Krishna Krishna Hare Hare |
Hare Rama Hare Rama Rama Rama Hare Hare ||**